

SOUTH CAROLINA NUCLEAR ADVISORY COUNCIL

NUCLEAR ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

July 19, 2001, 9:30 AM

Rainbow Rooms, Building 703-41A

Savannah River Site, Aiken, South Carolina

Members present: Mr. Steve Byrne, Dr. Carolyn Hudson, Dr. John Stucker, Chairman, Representative Charles Sharpe, Mr. Ben Rusche, Dr. James Navratil, Ms. Kate Billing, and Dr. Vincent Van Brunt.

Staff: Patricia Tangney

The second meeting of the SC Nuclear Advisory Council was held on Thursday, July 19, 2001, at 9:30 AM, in Rainbow Rooms, Building 703-41A, Savannah River Site, Aiken, South Carolina. Dr. John Stucker, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for a motion to approve today's agenda. Representative Charles Sharpe made the motion, with a second by Mr. Ben Rusche. The motion was unanimously approved. Dr. Stucker then asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of April 26, 2001. Representative Sharpe made the motion, with a second by Mr. Ben Rusche. The motion was unanimously approved. Chairman Stucker announced that the Nuclear Advisory Council has established a web site (http://www.state.sc.us/energy/nuclear_advisory_council.htm), and encouraged everyone to visit the site for updated information on the Council.

Mr. Charlie Hansen, Deputy Manager for the Savannah River Site, welcomed the members of the Council and the public to the Savannah River Site and provided a brief overview of operations and the mission of SRS.

The Council next heard presentations from a panel composed of representatives from the Savannah River Site, the SC Governor's Office and the SC Department of Health & Environmental Control. Mr. John Pescosolido, the Chief Financial Officer at SRS, provided information about the SRS Long-Range Comprehensive Plan including implementation strategies and fiscal requirements necessary to satisfactory completion of new missions and environmental clean-up. Mr. Hank Stallworth from the Governor's Office then outlined Governor Hodges' priorities and concerns, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that there are clear paths and schedules for exit of waste, and multiple strategies in place for addressing new technologies or missions. Finally, Mr. David Wilson from DHEC provided an overview of DHEC's work at SRS, and re-stated that it is important to make sure that waste coming into the site has a clear path and schedule back out of the site.

A detailed discussion followed these presentations. Mr. Rusche, Dr. Van Brunt and Mr. Byrne expressed concerns about the salt processing project. At the conclusion of this discussion Dr. Van Brunt made a motion to lead a work group to examine this project and

prepare comments on the EIS for the project. Mr. Ben Rusche seconded the motion, which the Council unanimously approved.

At this point, Dr. Stucker asked if the Savannah River Site received any low-level radioactive waste from other sites, and Mr. Virgil Sauls of SRS responded that the site does receive waste from the Navy. Mr. Navratil asked if the Savannah River Site could ultimately generate its own electricity. Mr. Charles Hansen responded that there had been no indication from Congress that this would be possible, and that the current configurations of reactors at the site were not capable of generating electricity. Dr. Stucker said that the Council would address this issue in more detail at the October meeting.

The Council then discussed the availability of tank space for waste at the site. Officials for the site indicated that the tank space is sufficient at this time. The Council expressed concern at the amount high-level waste canisters currently stored on the site and Mr. Rusche urged the Council to consider lobbying the state of Nevada to work with federal officials on the development of the Yucca Mountain High-Level Waste Repository. The Council agreed that moving waste from SRS would require constant dialogue between the Council, the Governor, and the Department of Energy. The Chairman asked Mr. Rusche to lead a work group effort to identify actions that the State of South Carolina could take to promote progress in the waste repository program.

The Council next addressed long-term commitments at the Savannah River Site, and Mr. Rusche asked if there was a report that the Council members could receive on the commitments and how they relate to waste and material handling requirements throughout the DOE complex. David Wilson noted that the National Governor's Association had a work group addressing this issue. It was agreed that Chairman Stucker would send a letter to the Governor urging that he strongly support the NGA work group's task and offering the Council's resources to support this effort.

At this time, the Council heard from the public. Mr. Ernie Chaput, representing the Economic Development Partnership, addressed the Council. He discussed their concerns of the uncertain future of the plutonium disposition project at SRS. He also stated that the Partnership is concerned about the funding of new tanks and the actual tank farms. In addition to these concerns they feel that the salt processing alternative has not received adequate funding. Mr. Chaput then stated that SRS is important to economic development in South Carolina and provides many jobs in Aiken, and that he envisions the site as a future energy park.

Mr. Don Moniak, representing the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, next addressed the Council. Mr. Moniak stated his displeasure with having the Council meeting at the Savannah River Site, and suggested that next time the meeting be held in Aiken or North Augusta. He also expressed concerns about the leaks in the high-level waste tanks and the MOX project at SRS.

Mr. Ed Burgess, representing the SC Department of Commerce, addressed the Council and gave brief remarks on behalf of the Department and the State of South Carolina's investment opportunities within the Savannah River Site. Dr. Stucker took a moment to address a few of the meeting logistics issues and he also apologized for the meeting notice not being publicized as widely as he intended.

At this time, Chairman Stucker moved that the Council send a letter to Governor Hodges outlining the issues that the Council had identified relating to the status of DOE's plans and programs for plutonium disposition at the Savannah River Site. The Council would recommend that the Governor ask the Secretary of Energy to delay shipments of plutonium to the Site until the Department of Energy approves and funds previously identified elements of the plutonium disposition program. In addition, the Council would offer to assist the Governor and his staff in working with the Secretary and his staff to achieve the goals of the plutonium disposition program. Mr. Rusche seconded the motion, which the Council unanimously approved.

Chairman Stucker announced that the focus of the next meeting would be nuclear power. There was discussion on meeting at the VC Summer Station in Jenkinsville, South Carolina as well as visiting other facilities. The Council discussed a visit to Oconee County as well as the Westinghouse Plant in Columbia. Chairman Stucker announced the meeting date will be October 18, 2001, and meeting logistics will be discussed and planned in the interim.

Mr. Navratil raised a question to DHEC officials about the drinking water in Simpsonville, and the Council briefly discussed other drinking water problems and available resources to address these issues throughout the state. Dr. Navratil agreed to lead a work group to explore this issue and to make recommendations regarding any Council action on the matter.

Chairman Stucker said that the Council may need to meet more than once a quarter as they progress. He said that the workgroups will meeting and relay information to other Council members in the interim. He then thanked the officials at the Savannah River Site for hosting the meeting, and said that after lunch, the Council would be participating in a site tour.

Dr. Stucker declared the meeting adjourned at 12:20 PM.